





US Army Corps of Engineers New England District

Yankee Engineer

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District, partners celebrate successful completion of Westover ARB project

Representatives from the New England District celebrated another successful project when officials activated the Westover Security Forces Operations Facility at Westover Air Reserve Base, Jan. 17.

New England District Commander Col. Curtis Thalken joined Massachusetts Congressmen John Olver and Richard Neal, and Air Force Col. Wade Farris celebrating this joint-services partnership. The two Congressman have been credited with being central figures in improving the working conditions of the nation's Armed Forces members at Westover and who obtained the funding for the project.

The successful partnership was the focus of the speakers' presentations. "We're here today to recognize the key players and mark the completion this month of the two-story Security Forces Operations Center for the 439th Security Forces Squadron," said Col. Thalken.

"Building 2510 is the culmination of a great deal of planning, coordination and much pride," said Tech. Sgt. Steven Pelletier, who served as Master of Ceremonies for the event.

"Today, with the completion of this world class facility, the safety and mission requirements of the 439th Security Forces Squadron here at Westover Air Reserve Base have been greatly enhanced."

Work began in September 2003 and included construction of administrative and operation facilities complete with associated facilities, storm drainage, communications, electric, HVAC, fire protection, paving sidewalks, armory, weapons vault, combat arms training facilities, training classrooms, emergency power and physical security requirements.

The 19,200 square foot facility is designed to blend into the base's overall architectural theme and will house a full range of security forces' operations and supporting services.

After the speakers made their presentations, Col. Thalken joined Congressmen Olver and Neal, Col. Farris and other officials in cutting the ceremonial ribbon. The event concluded with a tour of the new facility.

The project is managed by the New England District's Western Resident Office. Eastern General Contractors of Springfield, Mass., under contract to the Corps, performed the construction work on the \$3.8 million facility. Reinhardt Associates, Inc., of Agawam, Mass., performed the design services.



Photo by C.J. Allen

Officials cut the ceremonial ribbon at the Westover Security Forces Operations Facility.

Yankee Voices

Amal Guirguis Information Management



Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Jan. 16

Michigan Representative John Conyer first proposed making King's birthday a national holiday four days after his assassination in 1968. In 1970, California lawmakers approved a bill to make it a school holiday. In 1983, President Ronald Reagan signed legislation to make the day a national holiday. In 1986, the country celebrated its first nationwide Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

World Religion Day

This day is celebrated on the third Sunday of January to promote harmony among the followers of different religions.

According to the World Christian Encyclopedia, there are 10,000 distinct religions in the world. Only 150 of those have one million or more followers, and only 22 of those have a significant presence in more than one country.

Congratulations

... to **Donna Terrio**, Engineering /Planning Division, who has been selected as the Employee of the Month for January. Terrio received the honor for her continuous support to the Navigations Section of PPMD.

...to the Allin's Cove Project Team for its selection as the WE Committee's Team of the Month for January. The team was recognized for its outstanding performance, partnering with the state of Rhode Island and the town of Barrington, in order to restore degraded coastal wetlands at the mouth of the Cove and to realign the tidal inlet to prevent future erosion. Team members include Jenny Tan, Erik Matthews, Heather Rausch, Mike Remy, George Norton, Todd Randall, Marc Paiva, Ed O'Leary, Rick Orlowski, Mary Dunn, Eva Marie D'Antuono, Rachael Raposa, Raushanah Muhammad, David Goodrich, Chris Turek and Terry Negron.

Sympathy

...to the family of former Army Corps of Engineers Credit Union employee, **Ruth Kilbride**, who passed away, Nov. 3. Ruth worked at the Corps' Credit Union from April 1994 until its merger with Hanscom Federal Credit Union. Since the merger and the time of her passing, Ruth worked in the Consumer Lending Dept. at Hanscom.

...to **K.C. Mitkevicius**, Programs/Project Management, on the passing of his wife, **Susan Lind,** Dec. 15.

Chinese New Year -- Year of the Dog

The Chinese New Year falls on Jan. 29th this year and ushers in the Year of the Dog. According to Asian astrology, the animal ruling the year in which a person is born has a profound influence on personality: "This is the animal that hides in your heart."

Dogs of the Chinese Zodiac have a deep sense of loyalty and willingness to fight for justice. They make faithful friends and are genuine listeners and confidants. Those born under the sign of the dog make good leaders, counselors, teachers, police officers, and nurses. They are people born in 1922, 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, and 1994. Famous dogs include Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Madonna, Winston Churchill, and Mother Theresa.

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District Engineer	Col. Curtis L. Thalken
Chief, Public Affairs	Larry B. Rosenberg
	a

Editor	Ann Marie R. Harvie
Media Relations Officer	Timothy J. Dugan
Public Affairs Specialist	Sally M. Rigione

Commander's Corner:

District Engineer updates on Strategic Planning Group

by Col. Curtis L. Thalken District Engineer



I would like to take this opportunity to update you on the progress our Strategic Planning Group (SPG) continues to make. As I mentioned in last month's Yankee Engineer, it is my goal to present the fruits of the SPG's

efforts in a Town Hall, tentatively scheduled for sometime in March.

First, our annual program remains nearly equally divided among three components: support to military customers, partnering with local sponsors in the development and maintenance of civil works projects (including our own infrastructure), and support to other federal agencies, known as International and Interagency Support (IIS). Each component of the program is unique and we must find ways to provide the fastest and least expensive support for our customers.

Second, 16 enduring functions have been identified that

the District must be able to perform in order to meet our customers needs. These functions include elements of design, planning, maintenance, management, and regulation. The group must next determine what are the best ways to organize and conduct these functions, in the future.

Finally, The Project Management Business Process (PMBP) must govern the actions of our Project Delivery Teams (PDTs). Yet within the boundaries of PMBP there is room to tailor individual PDT actions to meet individual project needs and the PDT must act within the budgetary constraints of a given project. This is especially important to us, when most of our projects are in the \$2 - \$5 million range. Our PDTs must function efficiently while providing the maximum service for our customers.

The SPG's subgroups are now developing criteria to compare alternative approaches and we will then use the criteria to select a strategy for the future that can posture the District for success in the interconnected world of today. I look forward to presenting the SPG's findings in March.

In closing, we have made great progress this month on several critical projects: Shpack, Norwalk Harbor, and the Hanscom Fitness Center to name just a few.

Thanks for everything you do to keep these projects and our programs moving in the right direction —on time and on budget!

Essayons!



Photo by Brian Murphy

District collects 'Toys for Tots'

Jerry Nunziato, Lt. Col. Andrew Nelson and Janet Brayden load up toys collected by the WE Committee for the U.S. Marines Toys for Tots program.

Nunziato and Brayden, who ran the toy drive for the Committee collected 141 toys for the Marines who will distribute them to needy children.

In Memory:

Michelle Kewer remembered by friends and co-workers as committed, loving person

New England District family members were saddened to receive the news that longtime employee and Chief of Contracting Michelle Kewer passed away after a brief, but hard fought battle with cancer on Dec. 8.

Michelle began working for the Corps in New England on May 17, 1971 in Contracting. Through a succession of promotions and a lot of hard work, Michelle became the first woman Chief of Contracting after Charlie Coe's retirement in December 2002. During her years in Contracting, Michelle was involved with projects great and small.

Michelle was instrumental in the Corps success in its mission during the Blizzard of 1978. She played a key role in arranging contracts for snow removal, working long hours seven days a week until the mission was completed.

Michelle oversaw contracts for other historically significant projects to include the moving of Southeast Lighthouse on Block Island, Rhode Island, and the Cape Cod Canal Railroad Bridge Restoration Project on Cape Cod, Mass. Michelle also assisted in the CEFMS roll out at the District when the system became mandatory Corps-wide.

Respected around the Corps for her contracting expertise, Michelle taught the AE Contracting Prospect Class at one time, traveling around the country to provide the training to Corps employees. "She was very generous with her time," said Sheila Winston-Vincuilla. "She always had time for questions and not only gave the answers but made sure you understood the reason behind the answers. She had a great institutional memory."

"Michelle personified devotion to her job and to the people she worked with," said Dick Carlson, Chief, Construction/Operations. "When we think of the important business of contracting, Michelle was the center of it."

A longtime friend of Michelle's, Dick remembered his interactions with her early in their careers. Even then, he said, she had high ethical integrity. "I first met Michelle in the early '70's when everyone in the place knew that our contracting, probably called procurement then, were run by Ellie Russo and Michelle Kewer," he said "As a young project engineer, I collaborated

often during the workday to get necessary contracting work issues resolved and done. Michelle was a tough taskmaster in terms of complying with all of the rules and regs that surround the contracting process. This often put us at odds when I, the young engineer, tried to push things through and came up against the need to do it right. Through it all, Michelle performed professionally and I am the better from my association with her."

Throughout her career, Michelle received numerous awards, certificates and other citations, to include a Commander's Award for Civilian Service in 1994, that expressed sincere appreciation of her dedication to the Corps and to the nation.

During the NED Bowling League years, Michelle liked to kick back with her New England District friends and co-workers after work on Thursday nights and throw a few balls down the lane.

As with work, Michelle was dedicated to the league and served as Chairperson for at least two years and Treasurer for at least one year. "I remember Michelle when we bowled in the old NED Bowling League at Wal-Lex Lanes," said Dick. "As I remember she was pretty good at that too. Mostly I remember that she seemed to enjoy the friendly competition and had fun."

Michelle also had a wide variety of interests outside the Corps, especially with the charitable and fraternal organization, the Elks. Influenced by her uncles who are members of the organization, Michelle joined six years ago. As with everything she did, Michelle gave 100 percent to the organization and began assuming more important roles of responsibility.

Most recently, Michelle was



Michelle Kewer (far right) with Jane Apidiankis, Sheila Winston-Vincuilla, Eva Marie D'Antuono and Sue Coe, enjoyed spending leisure time with friends from work.

elected to the rank of Exalted Ruler, and was the first woman in the state to hold the position. Although the position required her to oversee all the workings of her lodge, Michelle always had time to roll up her sleeves and help out at all the events. "Michelle was always ready to help out at the Elks," said Carol Husselbee. "She served Friday night meals, helped out at the Senior's dinners and was right there for the spring clean up of the parking lot and anything else she could do to help her lodge and the district lodges."

In addition to her association with the Elks, Michelle was also involved in the Waltham, Mass., fundraiser "Relay for Life," for the American Cancer Society.

When she wasn't at the Corps or working with charitable organizations, Michelle enjoyed reading, puzzle games, movies, videos and television. She also enjoyed playing Bingo with her best friend, Distinguished Civilian Gallery Member Ellie Russo. She often volunteered to call numbers for the Bingo games at St. Patrick's Church in Watertown. Michelle was also an animal lover and liked to spend time with her dog, Dimples, her parakeets and finches and kept a tank full of fish.

First and foremost, Michelle was all about her family. She enjoyed go-



Always willing to help out, Michelle Kewer volunteered to sit in the dunk tank for a New England District fundraiser during the Founder's Day 2000 picnic festivities.

ing to the Elks Club and spending time with her uncles and lavishing much love and affection on her three nieces. "She was a loving, supportive Aunt to her nieces, sponsoring their softball teams and helping them with fundraising," said Sheila.

Michelle and her family went on annual trips to Florida and Universal Studios. "She always looked forward to that trip," said Sheila. "I think she knew every ride in that amusement park by heart." In a show of respect, the New England District flag flew at half-mast the day of Michelle's funeral. Although she will be sorely missed for her Contracting expertise and her leadership, she will mostly be missed for the person that she was and the values that she held. "I am proud to have considered her my friend," said Dick. "I will miss her wise counsel."

Editor's note: Stories about the passing of a friend and or co-worker are some of the hardest that a writer has to create. It doesn't seem as if there is enough space to list all of the great things the person has done, or all of the great memories his or her friends have of them. No article can completely capture the life of an individual or how much he or she means to those lives they touched. The New England District has lost not one but two very important people in a short span of time. And while the articles are only a small dedication in their memory, I hope that it brings some solace to friends and co-workers that the Yankee Engineer recognizes their passing in a small way. These people were our family and they meant something to all of us. We will miss them very much.



Michelle Kewer receives a Commander's Award for Civilian Service during the 1994 Founder's Day award ceremonies.

Laura Day remembered for her great spirit

The Corps of Engineers flag flew at half mast both at Concord Headquarters and at the Cape Cod Canal field office in honor of New England District family member, Laura Day, who lost her long and valiant battle with leukemia on Jan. 2.

Laura joined the New England District's Cape Cod Canal Office after working for the U.S. Air Force at Otis Air Reserve Base. Laura's friendly personality made her a perfect fit for the Canal team. "During her time here she made many friends and was known for her cooperation and

eagerness to participate in all Canal activities," said r a Donovan, Canal Manager.

"Laura enjoyed working at the Canal very much," said coworker Wendy Panto. "She always told us that this was the best job she ever had."

Laura was often seen supporting coworkers at the Canal's many activities and

Laura Day (center) relaxes at her favorite spot at the Cape Cod Canal with her husband, Stephen, and mother, Eunice Hoffman.

programs. "She frequently attended night and weekend programs sponsored by our Park Rangers and truly loved just being around the Canal," said Fran.

The Cape Cod Canal wasn't just a place of employment for Laura. Co-workers say that she spent a great deal of her free time on its banks soaking in the scenery. "Laura loved everything about the canal especially watching the cruise ships and the vessels going through the canal," said Wendy. "She often would call into the Marine Traffic Control Center (MTC) on weekends to see if any big ship was going to be going through the canal. Laura and her husband (Steve) would often drive down to their favorite spot on the canal right near the Canal Visitor Center in Sandwich and sit by the rock for hours and enjoy the day. In the office the joke was that it was Laura's rock.'

A family-oriented person, Laura loved to spend time with her family. She especially loved a special tradition shared with female members of her family. "Although Laura lived on the Cape, she would plan this girl's weekend away with her mother, sister and cousin twice a year," said Wendy. "They would rent a place on the Cape not far from her home. They liked antiquing, shopping and dinning out. She would really look forward to those girls' weekends."

Laura also loved cats and good food. "She enjoyed eating at Seafood Sam's, which was located right across

> from the Visitor Center," called Wendy.

In addition to working at the Canal, Laura had a love for the written word. She was a successful writer and was published in several regional newspapers and magazines.

Throughout her illness, Laura awed her co-workers with her strength and positive attitude. "This past summer while back at work during a brief period of

remission, she organized a large contingent of our staff to take a night time Canal cruise aboard the tour vessel VIKING. It was a memorable night and a true tribute to Laura's spirit," said Fran.

Although a Foxboro native, Laura lived in places such as Texas, California, and Okinawa, Japan before settling down with her family in Sandwich, Mass.

Laura is survived by Stephen Day, her husband of 35 years, their two sons, Timothy and Andrew, grandsons Cameron and Luke, mother, Eunice and sister, Susan.

Laura left an indelible mark on those she loved and worked with. Wendy and her co-workers will remember her friendship and kindness. "Laura was a great person to work with," she said. "She will surely be missed by all at the Cape Cod Canal."



The newly retired Al Lemire (left) addresses his friends and co-workers during his retirement reception.

Photos by Mark McInerne

Al Lemire retires from District with 37 years of service

Al Lemire, Engineering/Planning, decided to quietly retire from the New England District during an intimate reception held in his honor in the Gridley Conference Room, Dec. 20. Lemire retired from the Corps with 37 years of federal service.

Approximately 45 people attended the event. Raimo Liias served as Master of Ceremonies. He assisted Col. Curtis Thalken, District Engineer, in presenting Lemire with the Achievement Medal for Civilian Service for his outstanding service to the Corps and the nation.

Tony Mackos also said a few words and then awarded the guest of honor with a Bunker Hill plaque.

Col. Thalken concluded the official portion of the retirement reception by presenting Lemire with his retirement certificate.

Prior to his decision to retire, Lemire served a tour in Bosnia from August to December 2005. joyed his work so much in that country, he said he would like to return as a retired annuitant.



(Above) Al Lemire receives the Achievement Medal for Civilian Service from Raimo Liias. (Right) Al Lemire thanks friends and coworkers for attending his reception.



Buffumville Lake/Hodges Village Dam volunteer couples receive Presidential Award

by Claudia Hixson Buffumville Lake

Individuals who volunteer at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New England recreational sites give their all to help Park Rangers maintain and preserve those public lands for everyone to enjoy. A good many of them put in many hours for this cause, toiling lovingly in the great outdoors without want of any recognition.

There are those, however, who can't help but stand out from their fellow volunteers, and are recognized for their outstanding efforts.

Four volunteers from Buffumville Lake and Hodges Village Dam were recognized in January for such efforts by the President's Council of Service and Civic Participation and received the President's Call to Service Award.

Howard and Pat Southern have each volunteered over 10,000 hours and Ron and Sandy Zacek have each volunteered over 4,000 hours of service over their lifetimes, performing various tasks that benefit the country's public lands.

Project Manager Tim Russell presented the Zaceks with their awards during a small

reception at Buffumville Lake. The Southerns received their recognition through the mail because the couple lives out of state and were not available to receive their awards in person.

The President's Call to Service Award, created in 2002, is issued by the Council on behalf of the President of the United States to recognize the best in American spirit, and to encourage all Americans to improve their communities through volunteer service and civic participation. Individuals who complete 4,000 or more hours of volunteer service are eligible for the award.

Pat and Howard Southern have been volunteering at Corps of Engineers and other agency sites for years. They have been volunteering at Buffumville Lake for at least four summers, according to Park Ranger Claudia Hixson. Hixson, the volunteer coordinator at Buffumville Lake, nominated

the two couples for the award. "The Southerns retired from public school support staff positions and hit the road in their RV dozen years ago," she said. Sometimes they don't want to travel all the way from their home state of Washington to New England and they'll volunteer closer to home but I think they like Buffumville Dam best of all."



Ron and Sandy Zacek receive their awards during a reception at Buffumville Lake. The couple has donated 4,000 hours of their time volunteering at the nation's public lands.

Hixson says

that Howard Southern is a fine carpenter and provides a great deal of help in repairing and creating things like bookcases, outdoor signs, benches, picnic tables and brochure racks. "This past summer, he cut, painted and installed wainscoting in the remodeled Hodges Village Dam Student Conservation Association apartment," she said.

In addition, he joined his wife Pat at the Buffumville Park entrance station where they greeted swimmers and picnickers when the contract hosts had the day off.

Pat Southern is one of the administrative engines that helps prepare for Buffumville and Hodges Village Dam's National Public Lands Day in September. This is a long, cumbersome process. Anywhere from 300 to 500 postcards have to be addressed and sent out to volunteers and then





Photos provided by Buffumville Lake

Howard and Pat Southern display their awards from their Washington state home. The Southerns are honored for donating 10,000 hours towards improving public lands.

positive replies have to be matched up to appropriate park projects.

"Pat and Howard can always be relied on to help manage night and holiday events, fill in for staff who are ill or are away, take care of little emergencies such as delivering tools, equipment or other assistance to those setting up for special events," said Hixson. "We are very grateful for their calm, competent and cheerful presence in our midst."

Over the past seven years, the Zaceks, who are a local couple, have hiked and biked Buffumville Lake's trails and kayaked its waters while picking up litter, taking down rope swings, clearing fallen logs, inspecting and improving primi-

tive camping areas and keeping the Park Ranger staff apprised of problem areas or hazards. "Sandy and Ron Zacek are, without a doubt, two of the most prolific volunteers for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer," said Hixson. "They know what needs to be done and are seldom seen unless they need supplies or want to report problems beyond their scope, but seldom beyond their capabilities."

According to Hixson, Sandy Zacek has often remarked that she and her husband think of the Buffumville Lake open areas as their own. "That sense of ownership propels them to look after the property as if it was their own back yard," she said.

Federal Pay Rate Table for 2006

Listed below are the salary wages for federal employees who work in the Boston, Worcester, Manchester, Mass., New Hampshire, Maine and Rhode Island area, according to the Office of Personnel Management. Rates became effective Jan. 1.

Grade	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7	Step 8	Step 9	Step 10
1	\$ 19,621	\$ 20,276	\$ 20,929	\$ 21,578	\$ 22,231	\$ 22,615	\$ 23,258	\$ 23,908	\$ 23,934	\$ 24,538
2	22,060	22,585	23,315	23,934	24,201	24,912	25,624	26,335	27,047	27,758
3	24,070	24,873	25,675	26,478	27,281	28,084	28,886	29,689	30,492	31,295
4	27,021	27,922	28,823	29,724	30,625	31,526	32,427	33,328	34,230	35,131
5	30,231	31,239	32,247	33,255	34,263	35,271	36,279	37,287	38,295	39,303
6	33,699	34,822	35,945	37,069	38,192	39,315	40,438	41,561	42,684	43,807
7	37,448	38,696	39,943	41,191	42,439	43,687	44,935	46,183	47,431	48,679
8	41,472	42,854	44,237	45,619	47,001	48,384	49,766	51,148	52,530	53,913
9	45,806	47,334	48,861	50,389	51,916	53,444	54,971	56,498	58,026	59,553
10	50,444	52,125	53,806	55,487	57,168	58,849	60,530	62,211	63,892	65,573
11	55,422	57,270	59,118	60,966	62,814	64,661	66,509	68,357	70,205	72,053
12	66,426	68,640	70,854	73,068	75,282	77,496	79,709	81,923	84,137	86,351
13	78,992	81,624	84,257	86,890	89,522	92,155	94,787	97,420	100,052	102,685
14	93,344	96,455	99,567	102,678	105,789	108,901	112,012	115,123	118,235	121,346
15	109,799	113,459	117,119	120,778	124,438	128,098	131,757	135,417	139,077	142,737



Kate Atwood, Lt. Col. Andrew Nelson and Carol Charette go over the rules of the Yankee Swap before beginning the event.



Tom Fredette opens his gift as he examines his other gift choices during the Yankee Swap.

Holidays marked with celebrations at District

New England District employees celebrated the holiday season during onsite and an offsite holiday parties in December. Engineering/Planning sponsored this year's events.

The merry making began Dec. 15 during the after hours off site celebration held at the Sandy Burr Country

Club in Wayland, Mass. Employees and their spouses joined co-workers and retirees for delicious hors d'oeuvres, dancing with music provided by Ron Hurley, and of course lots of holiday cheer. Approximately 65 employees, friends and family attended the off site celebration. Retir-

ees included Joe Bocchino, Jack Caffrey, and Rich Santino. Former employees Marie Wotjas, Mark Applebee, and John Szarek also attended and reunited with Corps friends.

The holiday celebrations continued on Dec. 21 when 200 District employees, retirees and family gathered



(Top) Tony Mackos gets into the spirit of the holiday season during the Holiday Party. (left) Dianna Barela swaps gifts with Paula Kullberg during the Yankee Swap.



in the Concord Park cafeteria for the noon time party. With the cafeteria decorated as a festive winter wonderland, attendees enjoyed a sumptuous five-dish Italian buffet lunch as well as beverages and desserts donated by fellow Corps employees. Ron Hurley spun holiday and festive music in the cafeteria, while holiday movies played in the New England District theatre adjacent to the cafeteria. A nine hole golf course was set up in Engineering/ Planning to the enjoyment of the District's avid golfers.

Col. Curtis Thalken, New England District Engineer, introduced special guest Col. Frank Kosich, North Atlantic Division's Deputy Commander to the audience and made some welcoming remarks during lunch.

After dessert, Carol Charette and Lt. Col. Andrew Nelson called out numbers for the annual New England District Yankee Swap contest. About 25 people participated in the actual event, while other attendees stayed to watch the fun.

Retiree Rich Santino also joined in the festivities while Bruce Zawacki made a brief guest appearance at the end to wish everyone a happy holiday.



Col. Curtis Thalken and Carol Charette share a laugh.



Zina Cassulo-Henderson (left) and the Sneeringer family enjoy watching the Yankee Swap.



New England District family members dig into the Italian Buffet lunch.



Bobby Byrne, Eva Marie D'Antuono, son Matthew, Sheila Winston Vincuilla and Heather Sullivan relax and enjoy the festivities.



The Holtham family pose for a family photo during the holiday party.



Some of the golf holes on the Engineering/ Planning course were harder than others.



Col. Curtis Thalken takes his turn on the Engineering/Planning golf course.

Dredging up the past ...



Jim Wong*, Bob Mirik, John Hart*, Bill Mulcahy, Al Laraway, Andy Lamborghini*, Bill Coleman, Ed Kaminski, Joe Ignazio*, and Margery Cotter* pose for a portrait during their group retirement reception held in April 1997 in the Waltham Federal Center Theatre. * Distinguished Civilian Gallery Member

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